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THE ROBERT C. OGDEN TESTIMONIAL TABLET

KARL BITTER *

By ROBERT UNDERWOOD JOHNSON

O multitude of the untimely dead,
Who somewhere find and seal the endless
thread

That ever to *our* eyes must broken be—
Ye who now labor with no Death to dread:

Take to your happy ranks this new access
Of flaming spirit, this pure guilelessness,

This noble fancy, this brave loyalty
That cherished Beauty more, not Honor
less;

Him whose divining skill had power to save
Too few alas! of all our wise and brave

In bronze so true that what today he
took
From Life, tomorrow he to History gave;

* Read at the Karl Bitter Memorial Meeting, May 5, 1915

Him in the warmth of whose inspiring word
Youth was to memorable ardor stirred
And found so clear a path that, though
the guide
No more was seen, the pilgrim never erred;

In whom such frank simplicity did dwell
To know him little was to know him well,
Till even the passer-by shall long recall
The cheerful music of a silent bell.

Masters of Art and servitors of Song,
Who somewhere your recessional prolong,
Forgive us if too much we mourn the man
So welcome now in your beloved throng.

As ye are happy at his coming, we
May not dissolve in grief his memory,
But keep his faith in Beauty as our own,
With grateful joy that such a soul should be.

KARL BITTER: SCULPTOR*

BY HERBERT ADAMS

Past President of the National Sculpture Society

THE sculptors of America have suffered the loss of a leader and an inspiring genius.

Karl Bitter, a natural commander among men, clear of vision, a thinker, an artist, and above all, an inspiration to his fellow-sculptors, had already accomplished a great life-work, yet was still developing freely and vigorously, still arriving at higher and higher ranges of expression in his art. Had he been spared to reach the full maturity of his powers, what accomplishment would have been his! Each succeeding year saw him a stronger, nobler man, and a greater artist.

To have lived a life of such constant growth, of such rich experience and of such splendid achievement falls to the lot of but few men.

At an exhibition of the Architectural League in the early 'nineties, my attention was attracted by a bust of a youth. I was

struck by the swift, sure touch shown in the work, by the faultless construction, the characterization, the style. Then for the first time I saw the name of Karl Bitter. A period elapsed before we really knew each other, but meanwhile I always looked for his work, and marveled at his skill. Later it was my privilege to know the man, and now for many years he has been to me a friend and a counselor, one whom I constantly valued more and more.

Through all these years, the development of the man and the artist has gone hand in hand. In his work he was always the student, always the seeker; always looking for a better point of view, or a better method of work. But no matter what his point of view or what his method of work, his art always bore the unmistakable seal of his own personality, an art and a personality which were those of Karl Bitter, and of no other being.

We of his profession marvel not only at the volume of the work he accomplished, but at the wide range of his powers. He seemed equally at home in portraying the

*An address delivered at the Karl Bitter Memorial Meeting held in the Auditorium of the Society of Ethical Culture, New York City, on the evening of May 5, 1915.